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ONCE UPON A NATION UNVEILS 2007 SEASON

First Complete Season with Storytelling Benches, Tours, and Franklin Square

PHILADELPHIA, May 9, 2007 – America’s history was written on the corners of Historic Philadelphia, and **Once Upon A Nation** is bringing these stories and more to life all summer long. **Once Upon A Nation** is Philadelphia’s unique program for bringing history to life, featuring Adventure Tours (paid walking and bus tours), evening performances such as interactive *1776: The Movie-Musical* and storytelling by historical heroes, Harmony Lane (Colonial townspeople and children’s games), free storytelling benches throughout the historic district, and the newly-revitalized Franklin Square. On Memorial Day Weekend, the full season opens with 13 free storytelling benches (featuring a new location in Franklin Square and over 30 new stories), evening programs, a full slate of tours, and a host of free programs. **And new this summer are three great new ways to experience the venerable hills of Valley Forge National Historical Park** with storytelling benches, a story-tour trolley ride through the Park, and an after hours campfire tour.

“Over 540,000 people experienced Once Upon A Nation’s unique programs and attractions in the 2006 season, more than doubling our visitation of 230,000 from our inaugural year,” said **Amy Needle**, Historic Philadelphia, Inc. President & CEO. (Historic Philadelphia, Inc. is the parent organization of Once Upon A Nation.) “With our first full season in Franklin Square and brand new activities at Valley Forge Park, we are looking forward to even more growth this year.”

Franklin Square Open for First Full Season

The first full season for the spectacularly renovated Franklin Square began March 31, 2007. Franklin Square is Philadelphia’s newest destination in America’s most historic square mile, reclaiming green space for Philadelphia residents and further enlivening the Historic District. Franklin Square, the last of William Penn’s original five squares to be developed, was completely renovated in 2006 with new walkways, lighting, and landscaping as well as spectacular brand new features. The new elements include the **Philadelphia Park Liberty Carousel, Philly Mini Golf**, two playgrounds, Philly snacks, and **a renovated Franklin Square Fountain**. The Square has already become the newest spot in Philadelphia to book unique birthday parties and special events. Franklin Square is open seven days a week through October, including nighttime hours during the summer, and weekends through January 1. The brand new Franklin Square Shop sells Once Upon A Nation and Franklin Square merchandise. *(See attached Once Upon A Nation Fact Sheet for hours and pricing.)*

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Storytelling and Other Free Programs Every Day and All Summer Long

Once Upon A Nation's signature storytelling benches entertain visitors every day from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day. With visitors from around the world coming to Philadelphia, Once Upon A Nation's modern-dressed storytellers remind them of where it all began. For 2007, the thirteenth bench will now be located in the spectacularly renovated Franklin Square, and over 30 new stories will captivate listeners. Children can pick up a Story Flag at any storytelling bench, then collect a star from every storyteller on their journey. Flags with all 13 stars can be redeemed at the Independence Living History Center or the Franklin Square Shop for a special storytelling certificate and coupon book. The benches, and all of Once Upon A Nation's free programs, are geared toward children, adults, and history lovers of all ages. Other free daily highlights include the Military Muster, Harmony Lane, and Meeting Ben Franklin under the Mulberry Tree. (*See attached Once Upon A Nation Fact Sheet for details of all events.*)

Unique Adventure Tours Travel Through Time – Day and Night

Once Upon A Nation's **unique guided tours** of Philadelphia's historic treasures run all summer long. New in 2007 is Turmoil & Treason: The Path to Independence, (debuts June 2, Fridays and Saturdays through September 1) where guests experience the tension and excitement surrounding the signing of the Declaration as Colonial guide Timothy Matlack escorts guests to some of Philadelphia's historic treasures, meeting Colonials who make this thrilling time come alive. To make the experience as seamless as possible, Once Upon A Nation will obtain a ticket to Independence Hall for each guest as part of the Turmoil & Treason Tour. Another **daytime tour** takes visitors to Valley Forge from Philadelphia's Historic District and yet another charms children into a spirited adventure. On The Road to Valley Forge: Secrets & Spies Tour (debuts June 16, Saturdays through September 1), guests will journey back in time for a top-secret mission led by an American spy. Dangerous times abound as guests travel the roads from Philadelphia to Valley Forge where George Washington awaits their arrival. While at Valley Forge, they will experience the everyday soldier life of the ragtag Continental Army, travel through encampments, and report to Washington's headquarters to receive orders from the General himself. On the extremely popular Colonial Kids' Quest Tour (debuts May 26, Fridays and Saturdays through September 1), children can sign up to become a junior detective and help solve the mystery of a missing copy of the Declaration of Independence with some Colonial friends.

Evening tours let visitors soak up more history after the sun goes down. The Independence After Hours Evening Adventure Tour (Tuesdays through Saturdays) is a walking tour of some of the landmarks of Historic Philadelphia and is populated with Colonial characters who bring history to life right in the place where it happened. Tour takers walk through the shadows of Independence Hall (in this unique opportunity to visit inside the Hall at night, with no crowds) and experience what those late nights of the summer of 1776 were like for the Founding Fathers. (Tour includes dinner at City Tavern, Independence Hall visitation, and The Lights of Liberty Show.) One of Once Upon A Nation's most popular programs is the Tippler's Tour (Thursdays), a light-hearted

tavern tour of Colonial and modern-day watering holes. A Colonial Bar Keep, acting as hostess or host, shares historical facts about the traditions of drinking and leads guests in Colonial drinking songs and toasts. *(See attached Once Upon A Nation Fact Sheet for details of all events.)*

Twilight Brings More To Do in Historic Philadelphia

In addition to the two evening tours that are unlike any others in America's most historic square mile, the timeless musical classic 1776: The Movie-Musical becomes an interactive movie-going experience where visitors are part of the action, complete with sing-a-longs and props (provided) every Friday night. Pizza parties are also available at 1776. One-of-a-kind interactions with two of America's Founding Fathers highlight the summer as well. For four special performances from each one throughout the summer, visitors can be a guest at unique performance: An Evening with Thomas Jefferson, writer of the Declaration of Independence, or An Evening With George Washington, the father of our country. Visitors can hear their stories and interact with Washington or Jefferson at the Free Quaker Meeting House. *(See attached Once Upon A Nation Fact Sheet for details of all events.)*

All New in 2007: Once Upon A Nation Expands to Valley Forge National Historical Park

As Once Upon A Nation enters its third season, **an exciting new partnership with Valley Forge National Historical Park will bring Once Upon A Nation's nationally-renown programming to its second National Park.** Debuting Memorial Day Weekend 2007 and throughout the month of June, storytelling benches and Adventure Tours will engage residents and visitors in the treasures of history that took place in the venerable hills of Valley Forge. In addition to three brand new storytelling benches, each with new stories, and a storyteller-led The Story of Valley Forge Trolley Tour, Once Upon A Nation will launch a brand new Adventure Tour that could only take place in one location: Valley Forge. The **Valley Forge After Hours Tour** asks visitors to travel back in time to June 1778, where they spend an exciting evening at the famous encampment and see what nights were like for the Continental Army under the leadership of General George Washington. Start with a picnic dinner before checking in at Washington's Headquarters and then relax around the group campfire and listen to the soldiers' tales. Inspired by the popular Once Upon A Nation Independence After Hours Tour, this tour has a unique twist at Valley Forge. Guests will interact with General George Washington and our first First Lady, Martha Washington, General Lafayette, a Continental soldier, and other prominent visitors to the encampment in the era of June 1778, just before the army moves out of Valley Forge and retakes the City of Philadelphia. *(See attached Once Upon A Nation Fact Sheet for details of new Valley Forge events.)*

Fall Brings More Adventures

With the onset of fall, the storytelling benches are packed away for the season in Historic Philadelphia on September 4, but not at Valley Forge, where storytelling continues on weekends through October. Also at Valley Forge National Historical Park, The Story of Valley Forge Trolley Tour will continue to entertain visitors

accompanied by spectacular autumn foliage through October, and again during the Thanksgiving and December holidays. In Old City Philadelphia, both the Tippler's Tour and Independence After Hours continue through the end of October as well. In addition, there is an **October-only** tour: spooky storytelling and spine-tingling tales return to Philadelphia's Historic District with Cobwebs & Cobblestones. Tour participants are invited to step back in time with a ghastly guide, Abigail Wallace, as she introduces them to people from the city's past during an historically accurate journey to many significant sites, including Christ Church Burial Ground, the Free Quaker Meeting House, and Franklin Square. Tour highlights include dark tales of the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, and a gravedigger's accounts of the secrets entombed within Christ Church Burial Ground. And of course, visitors will continue to enjoy the outdoor attractions at Franklin Square through the end of the year. (*See attached Once Upon A Nation Fact Sheet for details of Fall events.*)

Once Upon A Nation is led by Historic Philadelphia, Inc. President & CEO Amy Needle and Board Chair Wayne Spilove, in partnership with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Independence National Historical Park, Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, Fairmount Park Commission, City of Philadelphia, and Valley Forge National Historical Park. Once Upon A Nation funders are The Lenfest Foundation, Philadelphia Park, William Penn Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, ACE INA Foundation, Lincoln Financial Group Foundation, Philadelphia Eagles' Go Green, The Avery Foundation, PNC Bank, Mr. Wayne S. Spilove, Otto Haas Charitable Trust #2, Connelly Foundation, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources through the Schuylkill River Heritage Area Grant Program, Valley Forge Convention & Visitors Bureau, King of Prussia Mall, Lockheed Martin Corporation, Starr Restaurant Organization, Starbucks Coffee Company, Omni Hotel at Independence Park, The Home Depot, and media partners WPVI 6-ABC, Philadelphia Magazine, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Daily News, and Philly.com.

Once Upon A Nation is an initiative of **Historic Philadelphia, Inc.** (HPI). Historic Philadelphia, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1994 by then-Mayor Edward G. Rendell. HPI oversees Once Upon A Nation, The Betsy Ross House, and Franklin Square, and works closely with Historic District stakeholders and the hospitality community from the entire Greater Philadelphia Region to continue to help build Philadelphia's tourism industry into an engine for economic growth. Through interpretation, interactive experiences, evening programming, Adventure Tours, and Franklin Square, Once Upon A Nation enhances the tourist experience in Philadelphia, educating the visitor and making our nation's history relevant to today. For more information, call 215-629-4026 or visit www.onceuponanation.org.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: High-resolution photographs are available for media usage at:
http://www.onceuponanation.org/html/15_01_00.php.